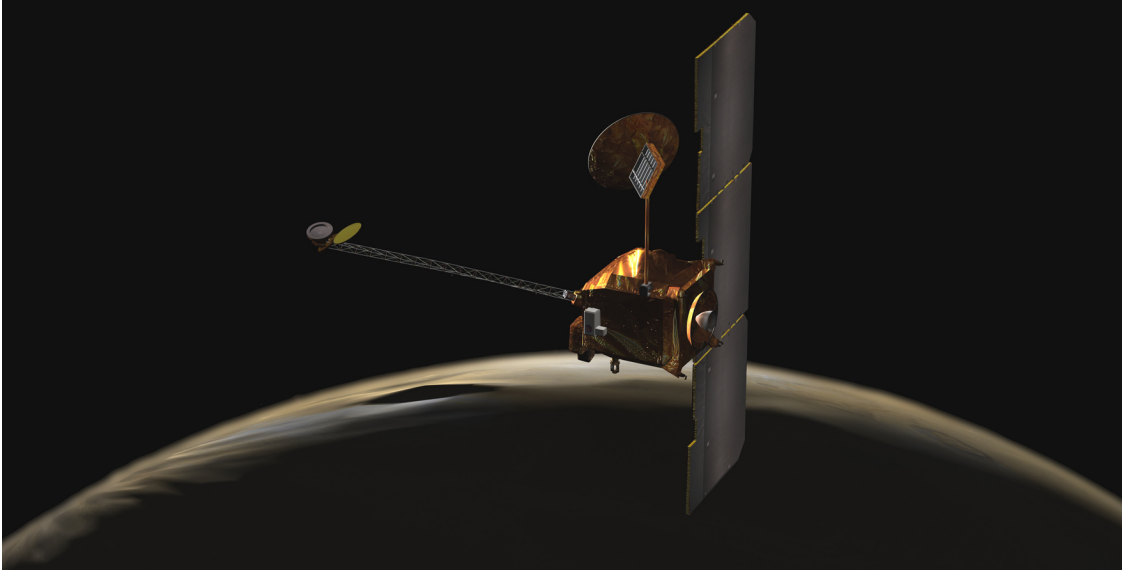
ODYSSEY 2010

PROGRESS REPORT TWO



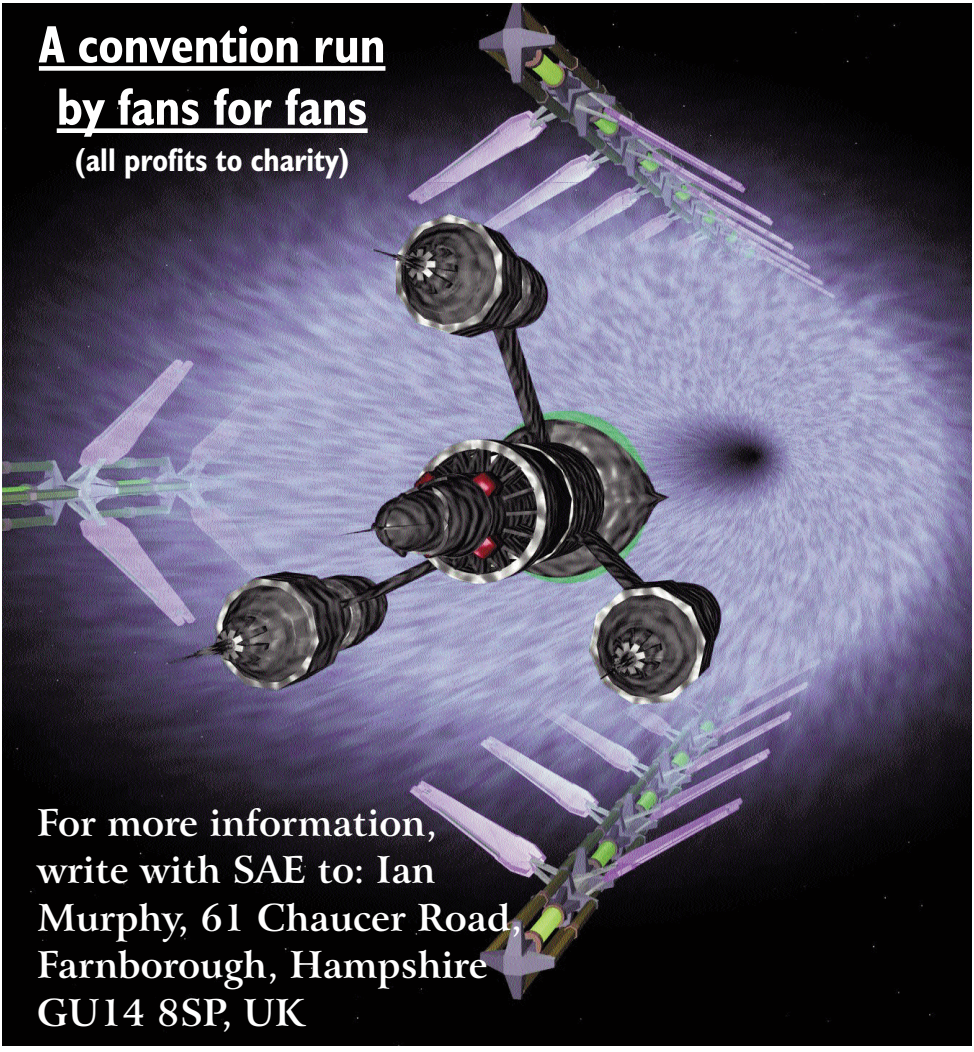
THE 61ST BRITISH NATIONAL
SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION
RADISSON EDWARDIAN HEATHROW
2 - 5 APRIL 2010

REDEMPTION '11

25 – 27 February 2011

Britannia Hotel, Coventry, UK

The Multimedia Science Fiction Convention



redemptioninfo@smof.com **www.smof.com/redemption**

ODYSSEY2010

GUESTS OF HONOUR

ALASTAIR REYNOLDS
CARLOS EZQUERRA
IAIN M BANKS
LIZ WILLIAMS
MIKE CAREY
FRAN & JOHN DOWD

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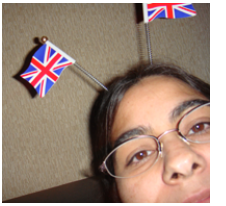
FROM THE CHAIR
RITA MEDANY



We are now into the last six months leading up to the convention weekend and I'm happy to report that the Odyssey 2010 team have been hard at work in getting things ready for the convention.

Since the last Progress Report, we've been busy raising the profile of the convention with adverts, con tables at other events and a good deal of networking. Several members of the Odyssey team attended Anticipation, this year's Worldcon in Montreal, where we helped James Bacon host a UK/Irish themed party to showcase all the upcoming UK/Irish conventions. The party was a huge success, with me personally handing out our little UK Flag stickers to more than 1200 people – over a third of the convention came along to the party! Odyssey 2010 is being held in one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world and I would very much like to see some of that rich diversity reflected in our membership.

At the time of writing this we have taken 819 memberships and it is heartening to see that so many people have signed up early enough to help us enormously with our planning for the convention. Thank you for doing this – we really appreciate it! To date we have been able to attract members from all over the world, including a very good representation from mainland Europe. If you are one of our European members, or have an interest in European fandom, then do please contact our head of programme with a view to helping out with or taking part in some of our Euroconference activities. We want to include some great European programme items, but we are a little short on volunteers in this area.

Work on the programme is well under way and I'm pleased to be able to tell you that many of the items included on the programme originated from suggestions made by our members. The programme team have been tweaking things continually to ensure that we have a good balance of items that are sensibly spread over the weekend and make best use of the rooms we have available. The team have been liaising with our guests and members to ensure that their activities too are distributed sensibly over the weekend and that nobody will be required to sprint from the opposite end of those twisty passages to get to another programme item.

Convention activities will start early and are set to continue late into the evening, with the masquerade, Mitch Benn, a ceilidh and disco all making welcome returns to the programme. We are also hosting a rather special event on Friday night - more details on that will be included in PR3!

Some of you will be aware that I have been looking out for ways that we as the British National science fiction convention can strengthen ties with our national fannish organisations. As a relative newcomer to fandom, it has always struck me as a little odd that the annual UK convention seems to have become estranged from these organisations and I have been working with the folk at the BSFA to see what we can do to address that concern.

I want to start the ball rolling by encouraging members of the BSFA to join us at Odyssey 2010, so when the membership rate increases come into effect on 16th November 2009,

we will be offering a £5 discount to members of the BSFA who sign up for an adult membership of Odyssey 2010 from that date. The BSFA has in turn offered to give all new members signing up for the BSFA at Odyssey 2010 a free copy of their excellent book, Celebrations: Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the British Science Fiction Association.

I'm going to end with an appeal if I may. One of the more worrying trends I have noted at recent conventions is that there doesn't seem to be as many people volunteering compared to previous years. I would like to ask each of you to help me reverse this trend of diminishing levels of volunteers. I know and appreciate that many of you will have little or no time to spare, but if you are interested in helping us with the preparations for the convention, we have quite a range of activities where we'd be glad to have an extra pair of hands. Experience is not necessary, but enthusiasm is most welcome! I would also be delighted if you were able to commit to a volunteer role at-con right now, as this makes it so much easier for the teams to plan their at-con work. I've asked our Gopher Head to coordinate both pre-con and at-con volunteers, so please do get in touch with her to register your interest at volunteers@odyssey2010.org. Gophers are one of the most important elements in helping a convention run smoothly, a great way for new con goer's to get involved and meet people as well as tending to be rewarding in more ways than one ...

Don't forget, you can help make Odyssey 2010 a really memorable convention by joining one of the volunteer teams and by letting other people know about the convention! By getting our flyers put up in your local bookshops, village hall and other places of gathering you will be helping us to welcome new members into fandom and to hopefully entice some old members back too.

Do please contact me via the Enquiries email address in the Contact Us section if you'd like to chat about the convention or share your ideas with me.

Well, so long and thanks for all the fish!

RITA

CONTACT US

Please don't hesitate to talk to us if you have any questions or issues.

General questions: **enquiries@odyssey2010.org**
Or by post: Rita Medany, 4 Evesham Green, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP19 9RX.

Membership/Hotel related enquiries: **membership@odyssey2010.org**
Or by post: Fiona Marshall, c/o Coton House, Conference Centre, Rugby, CV23 0AA.

Programme related enquiries: **programme@odyssey2010.org**

To volunteer to help out either before or during the con: **volunteers@odyssey2010.org**

You can also find us on the web at **http://www.odyssey2010.org/** and we maintain a presence on a wide range of social networking sites including LiveJournal, Facebook and Twitter - however please remember that the above addresses are the fastest and most reliable way to contact the committee directly with any queries you may have.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

What have you got to look forward to at Odyssey 2010? Well, the programme is well under way and I can already tell you that we've some exciting stuff lined up.

PYROTECHNICS

Steve Miller, professional explosives user, has offered to come and give us a live demonstration of special effects. He cheerfully informs us that if we allow him a bigger budget, he'll produce even more effects, so keep those memberships coming in!

SCIENCE

We're aiming for a strong science program with talks on everything from black holes to exobiology. We'll be looking at information storage from papyrus to the laptop, at climate change, at fun science activities for kids, and lots more.

BEN GOLDACRE

In addition to our wonderful guests of honour, we've also invited Ben Goldacre along to do a talk. Those who read Ben's 'Bad Science' blog will need no introduction, those who don't will discover that Ben is a merciless exposer of bad, misleading and downright inaccurate reporting of science in the media.

If the Daily Mail and Express headline a 14 year old girl who died within hours of being a given a cervical cancer vaccination, then you can trust Ben to tell you which scientists were misquoted and what they actually said, and to point out that the post mortem found a massive and previously undiagnosed tumour in her chest.

LITERATURE

With so many guests of honour, we've got lots of book-related discussions. We'll be looking at everything from the concept of utopia to the origins of the Arthurian legends. We'll discuss how books are adapted for audio, how people store and index their extensive book collections, whether Verne and Wells count as steampunk writers, and how humour and the occult are utilised by writers.

MEDIA

We'll be looking at plenty of popular TV and movie themes, but also exploring the rising popularity of audio drama and podcasts. We'll consider what SF really is (and whether Dr Who is actually SF). We'll discuss the way in which people write reviews and what sets a good review apart from a bad one.

ECLECTIC 21

The Eclectic 21 team are renowned for their cheerfully offbeat approach to media. Among other things, they'll be treating us to quizzes, the writing of bad fanfic, and the Primeval drinking game.

EUROCONFERENCE

As Odyssey is a Euroconference, we'll be looking at mainland European writers, both those who have been published in English and those who have not yet been, but would be recommended to a publisher as worth the cost of translation. We'll have panels looking at the problems of writing in English when it isn't your native language, at the nature of Eurpoean fandom, and the future of the European Science Fiction Society.

CABARET AND MASQUERADE

We'll be having both a cabaret and a masquerade and encourage you to start thinking about your costume or your act. Everyone is welcome to perform – it's very helpful if you contact **programme@odyssey2010.org** beforehand to give us an idea of the nature of your act. But don't despair if you have a last-minute idea – it will still be possible to register your act at the convention itself.

We probably won't be running chaos costume this time around *[Ed: unless you volunteer to run it - see Convention News]*, but we'll have a number of costume-related programme items to help inspire you for future conventions.

KIDS

We're planning many activities for kids – anyone fancy making a dalek cake, making a robot to navigate an obstacle course or learning about jet engines?

We're also hoping to offer a crèche for the youngest children – if you want to use the crèche, please contact **enquiries@odyssey2010.org** so that we know how many crèche staff will be needed.

COMICS

With Carlos Ezquerra as a guest, you can bet that we'll be having comic-related items on the programme. We'll be looking at the influence of 2000AD, the ways in which novels can be adapted into comic form and far more besides.

MEMBERSHIP RATES

Membership type	Up to 16th Nov 2009	From 16th Nov 2009	On the door
Attending	£55 / €65	£65 / €70	£75 / €80
Unwaged	£45 / €50	£55 / €60	£65 / €70
Supporting	£25 / €33	£30 / €33	£30 / €33
Junior	£25 / €33	£30 / €33	£30 / €33
Child	£5 / €10	£5 / €10	£5 / €10
Infant	£1 / €1	£1 / €1	
Apocryphal	£1 / €1	£1 / €1	
Beeblebear	£1.42 / €1,42	£1.42 / €1,42	

CONVENTION NEWS

PUBLICITY

You can help us to publicise Odyssey by spreading the word to science fiction fans near where you live. If you have a local science fiction specialist shop, why not ask them if they would be willing to display flyers or an Odyssey poster? Some libraries will also display posters for this type of event. If you find a willing outlet, please contact Steve Rogerson on **steve.rogerson@journalist.co.uk** and he will get flyers and posters to you.

PROGRAMME DURATION

Programme **will** start 9am Friday and not end until 10pm Monday (though the dead dog will run well into tuesdays small hours). There will be at least one or two streams on the very early/late slots, but there WILL be full multi stream programme **all** day for **all** four days.

CHAOS COSTUME

We need a volunteer or two to run chaos costume. We have several bags of fabric. We need a person to run a workshop lasting three hours at the most, to assist people in making a masquerade costume from scratch. It helps if you have a sewing machine, but a glue gun would do at a pinch.

Please contact **programme@odyssey2010.org** if you can help.

TOUR FOR EUROPEAN VISITORS

If you've travelled a long way and you haven't been to Britain before and you don't know many people, it can all be a little bit intimidating. If you'd like the chance to meet other overseas fans and go round London with a native guide, then some volunteers from The Science Fact & Science Fiction Concatenation team will be glad to escort you on March 31st, the Wednesday before Odyssey. These folk have been active in European fandom (even picking up a couple of Eurocon Awards) and know London well.

This day will consist of personal guides who are SF enthusiasts and who have volunteered to introduce you to central London. They will take those that wish on a short cruise down the River Thames through the capital, see some of the sights in London's West End and then end the day in a traditional British pub near London's European quarter. Participating Europeans can also use this day to get further advice on their own explorations the following day, Thursday, April 1st. Then, on Thursday evening, fans will be arriving for the start of the four days of the convention. Although the walk is primarily aimed at European fans, fans from other overseas countries will be welcome as long as there are enough places available.

If you are registered with Odyssey 2010 and wish to be part of this Wednesday tour then contact **enquiries@odyssey2010.org** and we will put you in touch with the Concatenation folk. Please note that for this to work we will need to know numbers well in advance so that sufficient guides are available. This in turn means that we can only provide this service to those who let us know they want it well before the convention. So please e-mail us if you are interested.

THURSDAY MEAL

Many of us will be at the convention by Thursday evening – 275 and counting are staying at the Radisson that night! We have made arrangements with the hotel for a 3 course buffet meal to start us all off on the right footing; priced at £15 for those aged 13 and over and £7.50 for children aged 6 to 12, with children under 6 dining for free!

If you would like to join us for the Thursday evening buffet meal, please complete the meal section at the bottom of your online membership form to indicate the number of adults and children in your booking who will be coming to the meal. Payment is on the door on the day. If you have any problems accessing your membership form or have not provided us with an email address, please contact the membership team to arrange your meal booking.

HOTEL ROOMS

The Radisson is now full, though some rooms may become available as people finalise their plans. We are maintaining wait lists for single, twin and double rooms and will be allocating any released rooms to the next person on the list for that type of room.

Please email the membership team at membership@odyssey2010.org if you would like to be added to one of the wait lists, or write to them at the address in the Contact Us section.

OVERFLOW HOTELS

We are in the process of confirming overflow arrangements with three nearby hotels; The Renaissance (opposite the Radisson), The Marriot (next door to the Radisson) and The Park Inn (a 10 minute walk from the Radisson or 1 stop on the free bus service). Full booking details can be found on our website. All rates are per night and include breakfast and VAT and you will be asked to supply a credit card to secure your booking.

	Park Inn	Renaissance	Marriot
Single Room	£69	£75	£99
Double Room	£79	£85	£109
Family Room	-	-	£119
Twin Room	£79	-	-
Triple Room	£89	-	-
Quad Room	£99	-	-

CONVENTION POLICIES

Generally we have held back from formalising our convention policies - they can largely be summed up as play nice, don't bring pointy or dangerous things with you and don't offend the Chair's delicate sensibilities. There are some things however that we would like to clarify in more detail to help everyone plan properly for the convention and to avoid any potential misunderstandings. Our convention policies can be found on the Convention Policies page on our website. Please read through these policies carefully and if you have any questions or comments, please email us at enquiries@odyssey2010.org.

CON RUNNERS

(THE NOT-SO-SECRET MASTERS OF FANDOM)

BY STEVE COOPER

Ever heard people talking about SMOFs, or being described as a SMOF? Ever wondered what this really means?

SMOF was a semi-joking term, coined it's said by the SF author Jack L. Chalker, to describe those shadowy bodies that lurk behind fandom, directing how it develops. Hence the term **S**ecret **M**aster(s) **O**f **F**andom.

More recently smof (note the non-capitalization) has been used as a generic term for those fans who organise all those conventions we love to go to. They're not so secret now, but in a way they are still the masters of fandom in that we are all in their hands when it comes to what conventions are put on.

If you've ever wondered why conventions don't do X, and why Y always features so strongly at conventions, the reason is that the current batch of smofs like Y but don't know much about X. And as they'll tell you at length, if you want X you'll have to get off your behind, stop being a passive consumer, and help put X into the convention.

How do you do that? It looks like such a closed group. It's always the same people running the conventions time after time. Yes, it can be difficult to get in, but on the whole smofs would love to have new blood, and no, smofs are not related to vampires, no matter how pasty they may look. The problem is that it's always easier to get Z to do it than to train up someone new, and trying out something new can be a big risk if it has not been carefully looked into.

This is where ConRunner comes in. Fans in the US have for over twenty years run a series of conventions called SMOFcon, for current, past and potential future con-runners. It's a place to pass on experience and talk about new ideas, so that problems can be identified and hopefully solved before the ideas are put into practice. Every 10 years or so SMOFcon has come across to this side of the Atlantic. In 2006, coming out of Interaction (the 2005 Glasgow Worldcon), the idea of running a European SMOFcon was born. The first of these, ConRunner 1, was held in June 2008. From all the feedback we received, it worked really well and confirmed that ConRunner should become a regular item on the convention diary.

Now we are coming up to ConRunner 2, which by popular request is moving to a winter rather than a summer date. It is due to take place over the weekend of 16th-17th January 2010 at the Mercure St Paul's Hotel in Sheffield. Full details are on the web site **http://www.conrunner.eu/** along with an online membership form and an application form for two bursaries that are being paid for by Orbital 2008.

If you have any interest in how conventions are run, or you're a current, past or potential con-runner, this is a convention you should not miss, especially with a 2014 European Worldcon bid in the offing.

CARLOS EZQUERRA

BY SMUZZ

"I will show you thrills in a handful of dust"

Ezquerra. Ez-qu-err-a. Spell it out. Say it. Relish it.

It's not the kind of name you'd expect to see written in a corner of a British comic strip in the late 1970's.

Truth to tell, you didn't expect to see *any* name on any British comic strip in the 1970's. In those days, strip artists weren't credited and weren't allowed to sign their work. These were the days when artists put their names on their drawings of buildings, lorries, number plates... There were rare exceptions. In the early '70's, 'Countdown' had credited their artists so the likes of John Burns, Gerry Haylock and Mike Noble were known to us, but it was only in 1977, some way into their run, that 2000AD made the wonderful decision to credit both artist and writer.

Thus, by 1977, I was utterly in thrall to the utterly thrilling art of Mike McMahon who drew Judge Dredd – the very essence of comics.

Thus it was, that every Saturday, my then girlfriend and I would trot to the newsagent (remember them?) and collect our armful of comics (including both 2000AD and 'Misty') and return to bed for a morning of unadulterated pleasure.

Thus it was that, when we saw 2000AD was to have a new sister paper: 'Star Lord', we put in our order and returned home with our new spangly badges identifying us as duly appointed Starlord Troopers against the Interstellar Federation ('Robot Regiment' and 'Laser Specialist' respectively).

Thus it was we opened this strangely sized (taller than it was wide!), strangely printed (nice paper! Bright inks!) comic to encounter Strontium Dog.

And Ezquerra.

Later, we realised that, very likely the man (if, indeed it **was** a man – The 'Carlos' credit came later) was Spanish and thus should be called 'Eth-Querra', just as we'd learned to pronounce Valazquez... but the initial impression was of something mysterious with a dramatic 'Z' in it. Well, not quite the first impression. The first impression was, of course, the artwork.
Strontium Dog was gritty. It was dynamic. It was superbly designed. It had a name that echoed the film 'Straw Dogs' which we all knew was Bad. But most of all, it was unabashedly SF. Not only did the guys holding the guns look like they'd spent their whole adult lives shooting them but there was no *way* these people were from round here.

Most impressive was the sheer exhilarating crowd of aliens and alien tech – REAL aliens. None of the crap blokes with bumpy foreheads and funny ears that we were still being fobbed off with in comic strips (yes, even in *comics*!). When this Ezquerra bloke drew alien mercenaries, that's *exactly* what they looked like and you could be sure they weren't talking Oxbridge English. This was a man who somehow understood space opera and knew that

ray blasters were bloody dangerous. This was an artist we'd been waiting for, for years.

In fact, it was some while before I discovered how **much** we'd been waiting. Ezquerra had, in fact, designed Dredd and drawn the first Dredd strip. It was him who Mike McMahon had tried so very hard to emulate (thus coming up with his own style that so many more – including me – would later copy). It was with Ezquerra (and, to be honest, McMahon) that I first felt that drawing strips was more visceral than the very elegant work of the excellent Don Lawrence (Trigan Empire) or Frank Hampson (Dan Dare). Somehow, the man's style was just as exciting as **what** he drew.

Ezquerra's style is noticeably in the same tradition as those great Spanish/Argentinian artists that graced comics for all too brief a time in the '70's: Esteban Maroto, Jose Gonzalez, Fernando Fernandez et al, but whilst his Lycra clad 'Ezquerra babes' are instantly recognisable, it's his grim anti-heroes that focus our attention. Ezquerra didn't do sword and sorcery. He did guns.

Though as an SF fan I'd never realised it, he'd already breathed life into previous characters in Battle Picture Weekly: Rat Pack, El Mestizo and, particularly, Major Eazy. The Major, plainly based on James Coburn, was all that could be cool about a WW2 British Officer who didn't play by the rules, and I feel it's here (and, also the moody El Mestizo) that Ezquerra developed his very distinctive 'Spaghetti Western' style.

After creating and chronicling the adventures of Interstellar Mutant Bounty Hunter Johnny Alpha (and his Viking friend Wulf) in 'Strontium Dog', Ezquerra returned to 2000AD where he's continued to draw Joe Dredd and, again, Johnny Alpha.

Like any decent strip artist, Ezquerra bases his characters on real people. Plainly Ezquerra likes Coburn because that's just how the Stainless Steel Rat looked when Ezquerra drew the strip adaptation for 2000AD, but there's another actor whose face and ethos have been channeled via Ezquerra directly into 2000AD's DNA. **Clint Eastwood**.

There's no doubt that 'Dirty Harry' was the original model for the early Dredd (even if, as Ezquerra insists, he "drew him black") whilst Eastwood's 'Man with no name' is plainly the basis for Johnny Alpha. Even more: the Spaghetti westerns are plainly the template for the universe of dusty, lawless, desert worlds upon which Alpha hunts or is hunted.

If there is one word I feel best sums up Ezquerra, for all his dynamism, brutal technology and heavy ordinance it has to be *dust*. It's tempting to make some connection to his home country (in which he still lives), but whatever he's drawing, I always feel that there's a gritty quality underfoot. Whether it's the irradiated mud of the Cursed Earth, the hot sands of Paprika or the overstrained streets of The Big Meg, it's never going to be sterile when Ezquerra draws it. And that's one reason why 2000AD has never been a 'clean,' 'tidy' comic, unlike the (temptingly) organized futures of TV21 or Countdown. If there is any one artist who can be said to epitomize the spirit of 2000AD, it is Ezquerra.

After 32 years, he's still drawing Strontium Dog and Dredd. Now he's assisted, not merely by C21st computer colouring but by his son Hector, and more recently he's drawing 'Bloody Mary' for DC Comics with Garth Ennis.

And he (Carlos) is coming to Eastercon! I, for one, intend to ask for an autograph on that Star Lord. I might even wear my Star Trooper badge.

FRAN & JOHN DOWD

BY JULIA DALY

Stalwarts of the Sheffield Science Fiction Group, John and Fran Dowd have taken their warm and welcoming approach to fandom to conventions across the country.

John's first introduction to science fiction was through reading, but he also watched the first transmission of "Dr Who" in 1963 with anticipation. He became Treasurer for the Sheffield Science Fiction Group shortly after moving to the city in 1974, but his first convention wasn't until 1982; Novacon 12 – he has been to every Novacon since.

John is a keen sailor, owning his own yacht, the Penny Star. He was one of only two attendees at Conspiracy '87 in Brighton who travelled there by yacht, providing valuable crash space for friends who found the hotel prices too steep. At this convention he worked on the information desk, and was infamous for sending a queue jumping woman to the back of the queue, only to discover that she was Anne McCaffery!

Since these heady beginnings John has taken on a variety of roles with gusto: from treasurer at many Eastercons, to pioneering the use of digital photos in Eastercon newsletters to designing and creating the collectable Groats given to volunteers at Interaction, the 2005 Worldcon.

What more is to be said? John has a beard and a Volvo, and he drives with his hat on. Oh, and he is married to Fran.

Fran was a member of the Warwick Science Fiction Society at University, after which she absconded to America for 5 years of comic reading and role-playing. Returning to the UK in 1987 she met John at a Birmingham fandom New Year party. Being a mover and shaker she swiftly became a "sort-of chair" to the Sheffield Science Fiction Group in about 1990, and attended her first convention that year, Novacon 20. She mooched around doing a bit at the 1995 Worldcon, where she foolishly got involved with the planning of the 1998 Eastercon. Fandom has been grateful for her hard work chairing many-a-convention: From her first, DiSection (the post-Worldcon relaxacon in Sheffield), through to Intuition in 1998, Paragon 2 in 2001, and Contemplation in 2007 at Chester, the emergency replacement Eastercon which she co-chaired

.

In addition to all this chairing (or, as Fran would have it, "sofa-ing"), you'll also find her name gracing the credits of many convention publications, such as the Souvenir Books for Paragon 2 and Contemplation, to being part of the newsletter staff for LX in 2009.

Not bad for a girl who describes herself starting out as a "Geek chick in the school lighting box." And yet, there is still more. Fran is a foodie in her heart and soul, and was the founding and only administrator for CHEFF, the foodie apa during the 1990s. She now runs a foodie blog, and is renowned (or should that be notorious) for her bust-a-gut breakfasts.

She is married to John with whom she founded the Sheffield Hogswatch celebrations. They live together in decadent splendour with a cat called Flynn.

MITCH BENN

BY JACQUI COLLIER

Mitch Benn used to be a really well-kept secret. Those of us who'd encountered him on his wanderings around the country - particularly the Edinburgh Festival - inevitably raved about him to others, but it was never quite enough. You *might* encounter his lyrics misquoted on Usenet, be made to listen to his first album by an avid fangirl like me, or even happen across him, his distinctive patchwork coat and his unfeasibly small guitar in the back room of a pub somewhere - but it was sadly all too easy to miss out on Mitch. The attractions of a man with a hugely versatile musical talent and a sharp sense of humour were hidden from most of you, and only those in the know could enjoy scaredy weirdos, crap shags, and the strange joy of the siege weapon Rhododendron. We tried to tell you, we really did.

The Now Show, on Radio 4, started to bring Mitch to a wider public, beginning in 1999, and hoorah for that. After a couple of years of obscurity here was a chance for fans to squeak "There! Him!" and point futilely at the radio to friends' bemusement. A number of other radio shows followed, but still there was a tendency for people to say Mitch Who? when he was mentioned by name. A large part of this is his own fault, as it's pretty hard to easily identify someone who can sound convincingly like Elvis, Chris Martin, John Lennon, Elton John, Jim Morrison, and Sting in the space of ten minutes. Radio is not a great medium for achieving fame, although as Mitch says, he's had people recognise him in the street as a result of *Crimes Against Music* and the *Now Show,* which is clever, if not a great strategy for world domination. Bigger tours, particularly with the lovely Distractions, helped spread the word.

But he persevered, and we persevered in ~~stalking~~ following him and nagging people to listen to him, and it seems to have worked. As anyone who was at Orbital in 2008 will know, Mitch can now fill a venue as comprehensively and enthusiastically as even Neil Gaiman, who kindly introduced him, being a Mitch fan himself.

Why was that so? Why should *you*, the Odyssey 2010 con-goer, attempt to squeeze yourself into his gig next Easter? Well, plain and simple, Mitch is a fan himself. Now Show fans will remember *Save My Doctor Who*, and *Call Me During Doctor Who And I'll Kill You,* and few fans will disagree with the sentiments. *Doctor Who Girl* is a blueprint for any wannabe companion (and a sweet love song to boot. What? *Someone* reading this is going to care more about the music rather than the SF relevance, right?). He knows his audience, and he appreciates us as much as we appreciate him. He knows how to make us laugh, where our sensitive spots are, just how many of us know Jeff Wayne's *War of the Worlds* by heart (he does), and why a well-timed Chewbacca will always bring the house down.

The only thing you'll regret is not getting there early enough to get a good seat.

BEYOND CYBERDROME 3D
BY ALEX HOLDEN

We at the Beyond Cyberdrome Institute for the Usefully Insane are proud to announce a major new scientific breakthrough in the field of high-energy particle physics. An acronym-who-shall-remain-nameless (SMS) was attempting to repair a fault in our Quite Big Hadron Collider experiment (more commonly known as the Heathrow baggage retrieval system) when he mistakenly switched a flask of liquid nitrogen for his Thermos full of steaming hot PG Tips (milk, no sugar). The results were shattering!

After our man had swept up the pieces of his favourite mug, he proceeded to run a series of diagnostic tests on the QBHC. It appeared to be hoovering up passengers' luggage and randomly teleporting it to unknown destinations around the globe (no change there, then). More significantly, something very strange had happened in the Radisson Non-Euclidean hotel, just to the north of the airport. A portal had opened up. A portal into a dimension previously unknown to BC scientists. A dimension that we have decided, for the sake of simplicity, to call:

"up"

Next Easter we propose to send a series of exploratory robots through this portal into the third dimension. We need you, the nation's foremost roboticists, to build them for us. These will be no ordinary Beyond Cyberdrome exploration vehicles, limited to the usual two dimensions of ahead/back and sideways. The robots need to act against the mysterious force known as "gravity" and "climb" into a strange and challenging new space (which, bizarrely, appears to be composed of substances that look remarkably like plywood and toilet roll tubes).

New challenges and dangers await: ramps, steps, wobbly bridges, trap doors, and more. Wondrous rewards await those who can face up to these challenges and succeed.

More plainly, we challenge you to build a small robot (either remotely controlled or autonomous) to negotiate a 3D obstacle course. If you are able to build your robot at home and bring it along to the convention, great. If not, come to the workshop sessions and our expert team of junk reclamation engineers will help you to build a masterpiece from old yoghurt pots and cardboard tubes.

When building your robot, remember to incorporate the 3 D's: *Drive, Durability,* and *Duct Tape*.

More information and reports of past BC events can be found on our website:

http://www.beyondcyberdrome.org.uk/

CLANGER STUDIES

FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CLANGER STUDIES
SECOND CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite the submission of abstracts on research in any field of Clanger Studies to the first International Symposium on Clanger Studies, ISCS 2010, which will be held at Odyssey 2010 at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, UK.

The International Symposium on Clanger Studies brings together academics, fringe researchers, interstellar explorers and hopeful galactic overlords from across time and space to exchange information on the knotty problems concerning the study of the physical, biological and social sciences pertaining to *Selenemus lanodiffertus postgaterii*.

Topic areas of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Astrophysics
- Astronautics
- Astro-acoustic propulsion
- Knotted loop string theory and chromotopology
- Gastronomy
- Interspecies relations
- Animal husbandry
- Acousto-anhydroponics
- Weather control and climatology
- Ferropoultry engineering
- Minor planetology
- Ecological catastrophe amelioration

Abstracts for both oral and poster presentations are invited. Abstracts should not exceed a sensible length and should be emailed to **iscs2010@beeblebear.net** ~~Accepted~~ All submitted abstracts will be published in the symposium proceedings.

ISCS 2010 Committee
Dr. Nik Whitehead (chair)
Mr. Mark Sinclair (technical committee)
Mr. Simon Bradshaw (technical committee)
Mr. Richard Proctor (keynote speaker)

This symposium is held in memory of the late and greatly lamented pioneer in this field, Mr. Oliver Postgate.

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B Beeblebear
C Child
D Dealer
G Guest
I Infant
J Junior
S Supporting
T Toy (Apocryphal)

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Alternatively, write to our membership secretary using one of the addresses in the Contact Us section.

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With people moving house or changing their email addresses, we maybe holding out of date contact information for some of our members. Please help us to get back in touch with them by keeping an eye on the 'Lost Contact' page on our web site that will hold the names of people we have been unable to trace. If you are in contact with anyone on that page please ask them to get in touch with us.

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SCI-FI-LONDON

SCIENCE PLUS FICTION

The London International Festival of Science Fiction and Fantastic Film or SCI-FI-LONDON as we like to be known, promotes science fact as well as fiction.

Filmmakers often tell us that sci-fi is tough to make due to a perceived need for special effects or lack of credible stories. Our festival looks at new ways of telling stories and puts cutting-edge research and practice in the spotlight.

Scientists, comic artists, leading genre writers and filmmakers explore where fact and fiction intersect.

Check our website for full details of our events or to watch one of the hundreds of free films on offer.

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